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‘Demonstrating the machine guns’: rebellion, violence and state formation in early colonial Darfur

In September 1921 reports came to Tenant McNeill, the British Inspector of Southern Darfur District, of a force being amassed against the colonial government within his district. This force was led by one Abdullahi Suheini, an Islamic holy man who declared himself the *nabi ‘isa* (prophet Jesus), sent to overthrow the Antichrist (the British).¹ McNeill made preparations for the defence of Nyala, the government *merkaz* (headquarters) which was his base in southern Darfur. Yet he lacked reliable intelligence as to the numbers and movement of the rebels. His communications with the governor of Darfur province in El Fasher, some two hundred kilometres to the north, openly expressed feelings of isolation and paranoia:

I have been quite unable to get definite news of this man. It is so strange that now I fear there is a general conspiracy, and that even those in the town who pretend to be going to fight desperately and scoff at the slightest danger must know it... I regret I am depressed but you need have no fear that everyone inside this fortification will do their utmost.²

‘Their utmost’ was not enough to save McNeil. Three days later a rebel force six thousand strong attacked Nyala. This was the biggest rebellion against British rule in the history of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. McNeill and the district Veterinary Officer, Chown, were among those killed in the attack. The government was only saved from utter humiliation by the resistance put up against the rebels by government troops and police led by *Yuzbashi* (Captain) *Effendi* Riziq, soon presented in the British press as a hero.³ Reports of the rising made much of the vigour of this resistance: one particularly colourful account published

twenty years after the event, and based on interviews with those who recalled the rising, described ‘each man loading and firing with grim determination till his rifle barrel boiled, the police women “luluing” in the background, nearly bursting their lungs.’ This account was written by the then District Commissioner of Southern Darfur, M.C. Wordsworth. The same account presented the unfortunate McNeill as a Gordon-like hero, killing many of his foes, but later being found with ‘lying on his back with his arms outstretched... an empty revolver in his pocket.’⁴

The rising and its defeat thus became the stuff of colonial myth: heroic British officials killed, but their loyal Sudanese subordinates saving the day. The strength of the rising also led it to attain similar importance in local memory. Wordsworth’s 1940s account wrote that ‘to the people of Southern Darfur the Nyala Rising marks an epoch. Dates are fixed, births recorded, ages estimated by the year of El Suheini. Similarly tradition will long preserve the record of the *fiki*’s route and encampments.’⁵ But in the aftermath of the rebellion, a government ‘patrol’ (a somewhat euphemistic term for what was an extremely violent military force) dramatically revealed the coercive force that lay behind what had appeared a weak and isolated outpost of government space in southern Darfur, crushing the remaining rebels and confiscating large numbers of cattle.

The Nyala rising appears at first sight to be a classic instance of what Michael Adas described as ‘revitalization movements... prophet inspired rebellions among non-Western peoples against European-dominated colonial regimes’, followed by crushing colonial violence against rebellious subjects.⁶ Certainly this is the way these events were described by Hassan Ahmad Ibrahim, the historian of neo-Mahdism in Sudan.⁷ But describing the rebellion simply in this manner implies a coloniser-colonised dichotomy redolent of the earlier years of

resistance studies.⁸ A substantive body of more recent research has demonstrated that rebellions against colonial power which were once presented as manifestations of ‘proto-nationalism’ were in fact shaped by divisions between and among local groups. Colonial ‘pacification’ campaigns were therefore also characterised by a ‘politics of alliance’ between the colonial state and certain local groups who used the military power of the state as a resource in pursuing their own agendas against other rival groups. The colonial state was an ally to some even as it was an enemy to others.⁹ This is a point made clearly in the Sudanese case by Johnson, who demonstrates that colonial violence against the Nuer of southern Sudan in the early years of Anglo-Egyptian rule was directly instigated by and participated in by neighbouring, rival Dinka groups.¹⁰ Similarly, this account of the Nyala rebellion focuses on the local encounters between state and society in Darfur which generated both anti-colonial resentment and the intensification or creation of local rivalries. But it also suggests that the government ‘pacification’ campaign which followed, which has attracted no significant attention from historians of Sudan and Darfur, was central to the processes of colonial state formation in the region.¹¹ The events of 1921-2 in Darfur provide a case study demonstrating the complex interplay between coercion and negotiation that characterized colonial rule, suggesting insights which are more widely applicable.

Some of the most stimulating recent work on colonial rule in Africa has focused on the ways in which relatively cautious colonial states engaged with local societies in attempts to make state power productive rather than simply coercive. Colonial agents knew coercion had dangerous ‘disordering effects’ on local societies, and shied away from over-reliance on expensive military resources. Therefore, it has been argued, state authority was generated and contested in the course of local negotiations and accommodations resulting from the engagement of Europeans with ‘African logics of power’.¹² Thomas Spear has suggested that

the 'inner essences' of colonial rule ultimately rested on 'mutual attractions' between colonizer and colonized. These attractions, he proposed, rested on colonial efforts at both mobilizing African ambitions for the future and simultaneously appealing to local values and institutions.¹³ The widely recognized large-scale violence of early colonial conquest and pacification is then, by implication, made into an exception, an unsustainable strategy of rule, rapidly abandoned in a shift to the subtler negotiations of Indirect Rule (or 'Native Administration', as this policy was termed in Sudan).

Lonsdale also suggested that in most African colonial territories 'the violence of conquest was giving way to the rule of law' after about 1905. The previously rather unpredictable violence of the local state had to be made subject to and contained by colonial law in order to demonstrate that the local official was 'obedient to the immense and mysterious source of authority by which he was at the same time supported.'¹⁴ Lonsdale's allusion to the mystique of the imagined state resonates with Mitchell's analysis of the 'state effect' – 'the effect of an inert 'structure' which somehow stands apart from individuals, precedes them and contains and gives a framework to their lives.'¹⁵ Yet in Darfur 'state effects' were not simply produced by the 'bureaucratisation of force'¹⁶, with everyday violence at least partially regularized in the practices of punishment enacted by chiefs and officials, but also by the continuing spectacular and unpredictable use of technologies of violence. This latter tendency demonstrated the existence of another kind of immense and dangerous power which supported local officials and which might periodically enter daily life. As Lonsdale also acknowledges of the Kenyan case, 'the violence of conquest was... never quite complete.'¹⁷

The argument made in this article is that the apparent exceptions of early colonial ‘pacification’ had lasting effects on the way people perceived and dealt with the state. Violence set the fundamental terms of the negotiations which followed.¹⁸ And whilst the state did indeed attempt to engage with local partners and local ‘logics of power’, it did not altogether abandon the habit of directly reminding subjects of its capacity for large-scale violence. The threat of violence thus continued to frame local negotiations and simultaneously demonstrated the limits of the state’s capacity to engage Darfuris in a more ‘productive’ fashion.

Moreover, the prominence of state violence in Darfur in the 1920s and beyond discussed in this article is rather similar to that previously observed in other ‘peripheries’ of the Sudanese state by Johnson and Willis.¹⁹ In these peripheral zones, the colonial state did very little to appeal to local ‘ambitions’ for the future, but rather hoped to insulate local societies from the ‘septic germs of modernity’ (as one governor-general of Sudan memorably put it) whilst obtaining the submission and obedience of local subjects, expressed primarily by the payment of taxation.²⁰ The threat of state violence, at the very least, was an integral part of achieving these goals, even when Native Administration was well established: Willis notes the last major patrol in the Nuba Mountains was as late as 1945.²¹ The broader significance of all this is to suggest that the recent emphasis on negotiation, engagement and ‘mutual attraction’ in the wider literature on colonial government in Africa runs the risk of neglecting the violence which ran throughout the workings of colonial administration, violence which was perpetually entwined with and inseparable from those processes of local negotiation.²² This article first explains the causes of the Nyala rising before turning to government ‘pacification’ and the state’s rapid oscillation between the uncompromising

display of military might and a willingness to accommodate specific local interests in the aftermath of the rebellion to explore these issues in the case at hand.

Contexts: Southern Darfur to 1917

One of the ways in which colonial officials explained the Nyala rising was to assert that those peoples involved had ‘no experience of stable government’ before British rule: their rebellion was against the simple fact of state control rather than against specific aspects of colonial rule. While a great simplification of both the causes of the rising and the pre-colonial history of this area, this assessment nonetheless contained some truth. Much of the territory defined by the colonial state as Southern Darfur District had previously been on the fringes of the Darfur Sultanate, a Muslim state that had existed since the late seventeenth century.²³ But the relationship between Sultans and the peoples of southern Darfur was never straightforward or settled.

Ecologically, southern Darfur was part of the *qoz* of Darfur, an area of stabilized sand dunes and a level of rainfall which supported a wide range of vegetation for both cultivators and pastoralists. Its most numerous inhabitants were Baggara Arabs, cattle pastoralists and semi-pastoralists, including Rizeigat, Habbania, Taaisha and Beni Halba groups. But in 1921 the majority of participants in the rising were drawn from two other groups: Fellata pastoralists (tracing their origins to West Africa, and sometimes more recognisably termed Fulani) and non-Arab Masalit farmers, who together were estimated to make up eighty per cent of the rebels.²⁴ The relationship between Masalit farmers and some of their Baggara pastoralist neighbours was of central importance to the rebellion and subsequent ‘pacification’ campaign, as will be demonstrated below.

The sultans never fully controlled this area: violent relations between the pre-colonial state and local societies were not unusual. In particular, relations with the Baggara oscillated between periods of enmity and mutual raids, and periods of peaceable payment of tribute to the distant sultans.²⁵ There were, however, significant economic links between southern Darfur and the Sultanate: pastoralists from the south of Darfur regularly journeyed to watering points in the Sultanate's heartland and sold animal products in exchange for grain from Fur farmers.²⁶ Moreover, southern Darfur had always been an important frontier zone in the economic life of the Sultanate: beyond its fringes further to the south lay Dar Fertit, the area in which both the Sultanate and the Baggara carried out their slave raids. The fact that slaving parties of the Sultanate passed through the Baggara belt had created a 'continual source of tension between the cattle nomads and the Sultans', though the Sultanate was also an important point of sale for slaves captured by the Rizeigat in their raids south.²⁷

From 1874 until 1916 Darfur was ruled by a rapid succession of regimes which all attempted to increase the penetration of state power into southern Darfur to a greater extent than had the earlier sultans. Turco-Egyptian rule in Darfur was established in 1874, following an explosion in tension between the Sultans and Zubayr Pasha, the famous northern Sudanese slaver and an increasingly powerful competitor with the sultans in the slave trade.²⁸ Turco-Egyptian rule lasted until 1883, when Mahdist rebels, drawing on considerable support from southern Darfur, ejected the Turco-Egyptian regime. The Mahdist state, centred at Omdurman on the Nile, ruled in Darfur for the next fifteen years, despite facing significant local resistance. This included a rebellion instigated from western Darfur by the *faqih* (holy man) Abu Jummayza, claiming himself to be one of the Mahdi's *khalifas* (deputies), and leading resistance to the oppression of the Mahdist armies in Darfur. Mahdist rule was

brought to an end with the Anglo-Egyptian ‘reconquest’ of Sudan of 1898. At this moment Ali Dinar, a grandson of an earlier Sultan of Darfur, re-established the Sultanate as a *de facto* independent state, though also paying tribute to and recognising the formal sovereignty of the Sudan Government. Ali Dinar repressed numerous neo-Mahdist risings, though none on the scale of the 1880s. In the midst of the First World War, the Sudan Government attacked Ali Dinar, playing on fears that as a Muslim ruler he would side with the Ottomans. Darfur became part of a colonial Sudanese state once again.²⁹

Attempts by these regimes and their military forces to establish regularised control of southern Darfur were resented and, at specific times, forcefully resisted as we have seen. The Nyala rebellion therefore might be seen as one of a series of reactions against the growing penetration of state power into areas that had been previously marginal to the pre-colonial state. As with these earlier rebellions, the Nyala rising was motivated by messianic Mahdism. Abdullahi Suheini himself was an individual who, having demonstrated credible powers of healing, was able to inspire Darfuris to rebellion. The participation of Fellata in the Nyala rising of 1921 is particularly noteworthy in this respect: a significant proportion of these had origins in Northern Nigeria, itself of course the site of Usman Dan Fodio’s great *jihad* in the early nineteenth century, and Fellata were important supporters of another major Mahdist rising in eastern Sudan in 1918.³⁰ Yet government reports on the causes of the rising, despite their apparent emphasis on religious ‘fanaticism’, also demonstrated awareness of the material grievances which motivated participants in the rebellion, particularly the Masalit of southern Darfur.

Taxation and predation

The extraction of local resources by the state in Darfur was undeniably a significant factor behind support for the Nyala rising. Government reports suggested that McNeill's replacement of 'tribal' tribute by individually assessed taxation was a major source of resentment. This was a more invasive and systematic means of extraction, which involved assessment boards, staffed by *muawins* (subordinate Sudanese administrative officials) and police, measuring the wealth of individual households, rather than a local chief delivering a communally assessed and collected 'tribal' tribute, more common in southern Darfur under the Sultanate.³¹ This innovation coincided with an outbreak of devastating cattle plague. Kapteijns argues that one of the most severe characteristics of colonial taxation in nearby western Darfur was its inflexibility: the destruction of herds or crops by famine or disease did not lead to the modification of tax assessments.³²

Yet while these novel aspects of British colonial taxation surely fuelled discontent, it is also clear that the government's demands for revenue were in some ways familiar as the latest in a series of predatory exactions levelled in Darfur by alien regimes during the late nineteenth century. The period of Turco-Egyptian and Mahdist rule in Darfur is locally remembered as *Umm Kwakiya*, the time of damnation or gunfire (depending on translation).³³ Under these regimes government was often synonymous with military action against resistance led by surviving members of the pre-colonial ruling dynasty in Darfur, and tax demands had often been experienced as unpredictable and violently levied predations by the military. In the early years of British colonial rule tax assessment and collection also remained unpredictable and connected with the predations of individual government representatives.

Adas argues that a sense of deprivation felt by local elites relative to colonial agents, including poorly supervised subordinate 'native' officials, was a key factor behind many prophet-inspired rebellions: this seems to have been a factor of importance in the Nyala rising.³⁴ In Southern Darfur, a great deal of the assessment of taxation was carried out by the *muawin* of the district. This man was said to have tied up several of the *omdas* (sub-chiefs) of the Masalit during tax assessment and later publicly flogged them for bringing in insufficient revenue. The same *muawin* was also allegedly known for taking women in every village he visited, before he even visited the village headman.³⁵ Of course, British colonial officials often blamed their locally recruited subordinates for bringing the government into dispute.³⁶ Nonetheless, the rebels were said to have called out the *muawin*'s name in the course of the rising and his office was specifically burnt down by the rebels. The *omdas* who had been the targets of his flogging were also leading participants in the rising.³⁷

The rebels were, therefore, perhaps less enraged by the imposition of individually assessed taxation as such than the manner in which it was carried out. The continuity with earlier practices of state predation made the local perception that the British (and the Mahdists before them) were simply 'the Turks' entirely explicable. All three of these alien regimes had functioned in basically similar fashion. One of the battle cries of the rebels summed up how government forces at Nyala were viewed (and demonstrated awareness of the isolation of the government in this remote region): 'You slaves of the Turks, where will you drink tonight? It is far from Fasher!'³⁸

However resentment of taxation also existed elsewhere in Darfur: in some areas of western Darfur, taxation demands were known to exceed the total crops of villages.³⁹

Admittedly, there were also clear signs of unrest throughout the province in the wake of the Nyala rising. Yet the major incidence of rebellion broke out specifically in southern Darfur, and it drew much of its support from the Masalit people of this district. Perhaps the most important factor which fed into Masalit support was a blundering intervention by colonial government into the local politics of land, and its consequent creation or exacerbation of local inter-group rivalries. The nature of this intervention was itself in part a consequence of the character of early colonial engagement with local elites.

‘Tribal boundaries’ and chieftaincy politics

The Masalit in southern Darfur neighboured both Habbania and Fellata pastoralists by the colonial period. Colonial records and existing scholarship provide very little information about the relationship between these groups in the period before 1917. Maps of the Darfur Sultanate suggest that the Masalit did not neighbour the Habbania before the late nineteenth century: perhaps this changing geography was a product of the upheavals of the Mahdiyya in southern Darfur.⁴⁰ We do at least know that Masalit were competitors with the Baggara in slave raids into Dar Fertit in the south: they were also, more simply, farmers neighbouring pastoralists.⁴¹ The relationship between these groups was likely to have been neither fixed in enmity nor altogether harmonious. But there is also little known about land tenure arrangements or boundaries in this area during the nineteenth century. Mamdani has recently argued that the Sultans brought about a ‘detrribalisation’ of land tenure arrangements in Darfur, via the granting of land rights to favoured individuals known as *hakura* rights.⁴² Yet O’Fahey has stated that there is no record of the Sultanate’s *hakura* system having spread into the south of Darfur past Nyala, itself around eighty miles north of the Masalit land in southern Darfur.⁴³ Consequently we know little of the exact nature of land tenure

arrangements in the area, or whether or how territorial boundaries between these groups were defined.

Nonetheless, it seems clear that the early years of colonial rule brought about an important shift in the local politics of land between the Masalit and Habbania. Early colonial administrators, preoccupied with the idea of creating practical and clearly defined administrative units, went about delimiting fixed territorial boundaries between ethnic groups. In this specific case, McNeill fixed the Habbania-Masalit boundary in Southern Darfur along what he believed to be the 'traditional' line of division along the Wadi Khaddai, a key watering point.⁴⁴ However, the area around the *wadi* was likely to have been a zone of interaction between these peoples, rather than a strict boundary between them. *Wadis* in Darfur served (and serve) as focal watering and grazing points for the seasonal migration of pastoralists; the fertile area around them is also attractive to cultivators. Drawing the boundary at the *wadi* meant that all land south of the *wadi* was now defined as part of Dar Habbania, within which the Habbania now had the right to collect customary dues from anyone cultivating or otherwise using what was now defined as their land. The Habbania *nazir* was not slow to seize this opportunity, demanding payments from many Masalit who cultivated south of the river. Many of the rebels interrogated by officers after the Nyala rising mentioned this new imposition as a major grievance, one suggesting that it was the chief reason for Masalit involvement in the revolt.⁴⁵

It may not have been coincidental that McNeill had, just a year earlier, appointed Mahmud Abu Saad *nazir* of the Habbania, and that much of his time was spent in close involvement with Habbania politics.⁴⁶ The Habbania chief was one of those men in Darfur on whom the colonial government had bestowed relatively vaguely defined and largely

unsupervised administrative and judicial responsibilities from the earliest years of their rule in Darfur, even before the policy of Native Administration in Sudan more widely was articulated.⁴⁷ Mahmud was a powerful figure in the politics of southern Darfur, and owed his position to McNeill's support. In contrast the Masalit were considered a minor group, and McNeill had kept his distance from their chiefs.

So the rebellion of colonised against colonizer, was also directly connected to the local rivalry between Habbania and Masalit, and to the engagement of the colonial state with particular local elites. For the Masalit, an alien government had aligned itself with the interests of the Habbania. A new sense of deprivation experienced by ordinary and elite Masalit relative to their Habbania neighbours was just as significant as the deprivation experienced by local elites relative to government officials in motivating rebellion.⁴⁸

If land and taxation grievances motivated many of the rank-and-file participants, there were also local elites who seized on the rebellion in order to further their own ambitions. The state's accommodation with particular individuals in the local politics of southern Darfur had also led to the deposition or marginalisation of other less favoured individuals, several of whom proved key figures in the organisation of the rising: they were men who could call on sectional or lineage support to join the rebellion. One of the key ringleaders of the revolt was an ex-chief of the Ibba section of the Fellata, known to the administration as Andugga, who had been deposed, probably by McNeill.⁴⁹ In contrast to the support which Andugga was able to bring to the rebellion, the current Ibba chief appointed by the British, Abu Homeira, was said to have little authority over his subjects at this time. Another ringleader was the young and ambitious nephew of one of the two current chiefs of the southern Masalit, Ibrahim Wad Abubakr Abdel Rahman, who was elected a new 'Sultan' by the Masalit rebels.⁵⁰ His uncle,

Sultan Tor Kusha, was out of communication with the government before the rising, and did nothing to warn them of it. The other main Masalit chief, Melik Dud, languished in prison at the time of the rising, imprisoned for various speculations identified by McNeill. The government later believed this was one of McNeill's key errors of judgement, as Melik Dud might have restrained his people from participation in the rebellion if he had been free: his imprisonment had created a dangerous local vacuum of authority.⁵¹ The Melik's imprisonment may have also been a factor in actively motivating Masalit support for the rising, which perhaps expressed resentment with state interference in local politics.

In sum, a combination of messianic belief, resentment against the unpredictable exactions of alien state power, and state interventions in the local politics of land and chieftaincy all provided fuel for a large and well-supported rebellion in 1921. But the longer-term significance of the 1921 rising for Darfur lies in the nature of the government's response to it, and the image that was thus projected of government power.

Patrol 99: showing the government's strength

After the initial defeat of the rebels at Nyala, they regrouped under new leadership to attempt a second attack on the government. The rising in Southern Darfur had also triggered signs of unrest throughout the rest of the province. In response the colonial government pursued a multi-pronged strategy, in which military violence was closely associated with local negotiation and conciliation, to re-assert its authority. First, rebellious populations were to see an unprecedented demonstration of the coercive power of the colonial state. Second, and simultaneously, the government would make some moves towards conciliating some of

the grievances of the rebels. Third, the government would pursue increased surveillance of local affairs.

Officials believed that it was the perceived weakness of the government in Southern Darfur that had prompted rebels to believe that they could succeed in 1921: the garrison at Nyala had been withdrawn not long before the rising.⁵² Even in 1916, the government's invasion of Darfur had progressed through eastern and central Darfur to El Fasher. The south of the region in contrast had seen little of the new technologies of violence available to the state.⁵³ So now the might of the military resources available to colonial government was to be exhibited: this was government as spectacle. Savile, Governor of Darfur, wanted to demonstrate that 'the strength of the government is not to be gauged merely by forces at Nyala'. The patrol should move with 'as much display of force as possible'.⁵⁴ People were to be made to realize that behind the apparently isolated Inspector and his police lay a crushing and irresistibly powerful coercive force. In Southern Darfur the patrol involved two Mounted Infantry companies, three Camel Companies, one hundred Western Arab Corps infantry, seven Vickers Guns and two hundred friendlies, the latter recruited from most of the ethnic groups in southern Darfur with the exception of the Massalit and Fellata.⁵⁵ At this point, colonial government made clear its membership of a long lineage of state violence against recalcitrant subjects in Darfur, though at the same time it crucially showed itself to be a more potent force than any of its predecessors, by the utilization of terrifying new technologies. Machine guns replaced the armed cavalry of the Sultanate as the primary demonstration of the government's mastery of military technology. An estimated two to three thousand rebels who had regrouped after their initial defeat at Nyala attacked the patrol at the end of January 1922. This attack was repulsed by overwhelming firepower: this really was the end of the 1921-2 unrest.⁵⁶

The government decided to issue a general amnesty for the mass of participants in the rising. But the patrol was to arrest all ringleaders, and recover Government arms and ammunition taken by the rebels. And all cattle and horses held by both the leaders of the rising and, crucially, the villages which were believed to have supported them were to be confiscated. The patrol would also take whatever *durra* (sorghum) it required from 'implicated' villages. Finally the Governor of Darfur wanted the villages of all participants in the rising to be razed to the ground, as a 'reprisal for the burning of native quarters and *merkaz* offices at Nyala' and also suggested to the Civil Secretary that the burning of crops should be considered.⁵⁷ These last two suggestions were blocked by the Civil Secretary: no crops were to be burnt and 'as far as possible' only the houses of ringleaders should be burnt down.⁵⁸ But this would still allow the patrol to confiscate the entire animal holdings of implicated villages, and take as much *durra* as they wanted. In practice, this meant that the entire Masalit and Fellata peoples were treated as rebels. The commanding officer of the patrol, 'owing to the difficulty of distinguishing between innocent and guilty held a meeting of leading men who asked him to fix an indemnity which he did at a thousand cattle and a hundred horses from the Masalit besides those already captured by the Patrol and two thousand cattle and three hundred horses from Fellata'. The leading men 'seemed satisfied and went to collect them'.⁵⁹ However by February 1922, 8,600 cattle had been captured in total by the patrol, many more than this initial indemnity.⁶⁰ The Masalit and Fellata were said to have lost almost everything they had after the depredations of the government patrol.⁶¹ This was pillage on a huge scale.

While the patrol had its most dramatic and punitive impact in Southern Darfur, there were displays of coercive force throughout restless areas of the province to make a

spectacular impact in the minds of the people, who would internalize a sense of the state's awesome power. At Kebkebia in Northern Darfur, Bimbashi (Major) Craig gave 'a demonstration ride... in the Rolls Royce box car [an armoured car equipped with a machine gun turret]. The demonstration created a great impression - a large number of the people locking themselves in their houses'.⁶² Meanwhile, Sultan Endoka in Dar Masalit was also 'very impressed with the cars and machine gun, out of which they fired some sixty rounds of ammunition at a target as a demonstration for the Sultan'. Chiefs were to be reminded of the government's power as well as their subjects. On the border between Western and Southern Darfur, where one village had resisted taxation assessment, the patrol rounded up fifty men and the village was collectively fined £E100.⁶³

Exhibiting ringleaders

The government also pursued the individuals who it believed to be the leaders of the rebellion with great ruthlessness. The colonial state's profound deficit of local knowledge was exhibited in its dependence on local information to identify and find the 'ringleaders'. So, in a proclamation of 1921 which defined the ringleaders as 'outlaws', rewards were offered for their capture or killing: rewards would be paid to those 'bringing the head of each man together with some persons known to the Government who can identify the head as that of the person for whose killing the reward is intended'.⁶⁴ The government's means of identifying dead ringleaders, killed by people who it did not know, thus also depended on those it judged to be reliable local intermediaries. This was a state which could not see. When those identified as leaders survived their capture, questions remained as how to deal with them. One captured fugitive apparently declared to his captors: 'prove the least thing against me ... and I shall not complain if you hang me'.⁶⁵ The absence of admissible evidence against

ringleaders, which this man was apparently well aware of, reinforced the preference of officials for the simple killing of suspected ringleaders. The Governor of Darfur was 'very glad Adam El Gellabi [one of the ringleaders] was shot' as it prevented the 'farce' of having 'no evidence whatever' against him.⁶⁶

The British also used the spectacular display of the corpses or heads of vanquished enemies in order to reinforce their authority. While the Darfur sultans had enacted such displays in the capital of the pre-colonial state, El Fasher, colonial officials now used Nyala, their local district headquarters, as the stage for such performances, demonstrating the state's penetration into the peripheries of the old Sultanate.⁶⁷ Two ringleaders were killed by a force of 'friendlies' (including Rizeigat, Messeria Arabs and Massalit sent up by the chief Melik Dud) in January 1922, and their heads were exposed on poles at the entrance to the Nyala police headquarters.⁶⁸ When another rebel leader died from his wounds in the Nyala prison, the government put on a rather theatrical show with his corpse the next day. Troops paraded around Nyala, and the man's body was carried on a broken *angarib* (rope bed) by four prisoners into the centre of the town, where it was 'publicly burnt before all the Nyala inhabitants'.⁶⁹ Criticism of this action by the Governor of Darfur was ignored by the isolated local District Commissioner, who clearly wanted to avoid any risk of understating his own personal power. Officials noted that such gruesome spectacles were intended to deepen 'the impression that the government is too strong to fight against'.⁷⁰

Chiefs and Patrol 99

The aftermath of the Nyala rising also saw most of the incumbent local elite in Southern Darfur decisively throw in their lot with the government. Some of them were richly

rewarded for this. Moreover, state imperatives and local politics continued to influence one another in the course of the ‘pacification’ campaign as they had done in the outbreak of rebellion. As other recent studies have shown, even when colonial states asserted their dominance in brutal and destructive fashion, opportunities continued to exist for local actors to use state power to advance local agendas, and sometimes to exploit opportunities for individual accumulation.⁷¹ And the government patrol in southern Darfur relied on the knowledge and assistance of chiefly intermediaries to achieve its goals. Again there is precedent for this alliance with specific local groups to fight against enemies of the state in Darfur during both the Turco-Egyptian and Mahdist period: notably General Gordon, when Governor General of Sudan, also used the Baggara of southern Darfur against other resistant local populations.⁷²

The Habbania pursued their rivalry with the Masalit through participation in the government patrol from which they benefitted materially. Cattle taken from the Masalit and the Fellata were originally to be kept by the state, but having been captured in such large numbers and kept in overcrowded *zaribas* (thorn enclosures) with a high risk of disease, over 5,000 of the animals were distributed on loan to the loyal *nazirs* as *amanat* (property held in trust). However this became a permanent arrangement, and many of the chiefs did not pay for the cattle nor list them for taxation. Habbania men were the most active in the capture (or raiding) of Masalit cattle in the course of the patrol. Their *Nazir* Mahmud Abu Saad brought many of the captured cattle to Nyala, but also ‘swapped any good animals among the loot for inferior ones from [the Habbania’s] own herds’.⁷³ So while the patrol devastated Fellata and Masalit economies, it also helped other groups (and especially their leaders) in Southern Darfur to make up for their losses from the cattle plague of 1921.⁷⁴ Silver and bronze medals were handed out to the chiefs who participated either in the defence of Nyala, or (more

numerously) participated in the patrol. Abu Saad was one of those who received a silver medal, and while he was said to have helped himself personally to around 200 Masalit cattle - apparently a personal gain of unique size among the chiefs who participated in the patrol - this did not concern the government.⁷⁵

Many chiefs were therefore closely associated with the violent power of the patrol of 1921-2, in the eyes of their own subjects as well as those of rival neighbouring groups. When troops arrived in Dar Rizeigat in December 1921 the Rizeigat chief Ibrahim Musa and the *muawin* gathered together the Rizeigat *omdas* (sub-chiefs), *sheikhs* and people for a 'demonstration of the machine guns'. The patrol would then 'make a tour in the Rizeigat country to show off the troops to the people'.⁷⁶ This was a deliberate attempt to reinforce Ibrahim Musa's position among his people: immediately before the patrol's arrival two of the Rizeigat *omdas* from a rival section of the Rizeigat had refused to recognize Ibrahim Musa's authority, withholding tribute revenue they had collected.⁷⁷ Ibrahim Musa was a valuable ally to the state: he had given significant support in the initial conquest of Darfur in 1916 and had provided fifty of the two hundred 'friendlies' that participated in Patrol 99. Accordingly, the trouble in Ibrahim's *dar* was not seen to be principally a result of the *nazir*'s own misrule but rather had been caused by a 'long absence of troops from this district'.⁷⁸ Sure enough, challenges to Ibrahim Musa's authority faded away after this tour.

Chiefs also pursued individual political agendas when responding to the state's demand that the 'ringleaders' of the rebellion be produced. The dependence of the state on the local knowledge of these men in order to find the 'ringleaders' could easily be exploited. Most strikingly, the Fellata *nazir* Abu Homeira (now appointed over both main Fellata sections) had five so-called *fuqara* (holy men) arrested in early 1922; all these men were all

plotting to complain against Homeira to the government.⁷⁹ Yet local elites also sometimes sheltered those targeted by the state for arrest, particularly sub-chiefs who had more distant relationships with and affiliation to the state. Before his capture, Adam el Gellabi, one of the leaders, had hidden in the Masalit village of Deleiba where ‘all the people knew of (his) presence and they and all the people of the *omodia* [the sub-chieftaincy division] together with their *omdas* and *sheikhs* swore not to divulge his presence to the Government’.⁸⁰ Adam was in fact the son of the local *omda*, and once he was killed, the *omda*, *wakil omda* [deputy sub-chief] and village *sheikh* were all heavily fined.⁸¹ Government was signaling its expectation that its chiefly intermediaries would put government priorities ahead of their own kin interests.

Where chiefs did assist government in the arrest of those believed to be ringleaders, they stood to gain material rewards and improved standing with the government. Nonetheless the fear of losing legitimacy among their subjects by handing over popular suspects meant that there were limits to how far they simply acted as agents of the state – their position remained awkwardly balanced. The best example of these tensions is Melik Dud Murra of the Masalit, who had been in prison at the time of the rising. He gave the state great assistance in the capture of ringleaders, providing men to hunt ringleaders down. The use of these local ‘friendlies’ was felt to be peculiarly effective: McNeill’s successor in Darfur commented that ‘surprise was essential’ to catch the ringleaders and ‘uniforms were considered undesirable’. The Inspector commented on one occasion that the Melik’s men conducted ‘what was practically a disciplined exhibition, with which any force of police or MI (Mounted Infantry) could be satisfied... they were fighting without government supervision of any kind, on behalf of the Government at considerable risk to themselves’.⁸² Such effective ‘exhibitions’ did not incur the cost of further government patrols. By the later part of 1922, Dud Murra had

been showered with rewards from the government and his 'swollen head' had made him unpopular with the other chiefs of the region.⁸³

However, in 1924 it was clear that under Dud Murra's watch, two leading rebels were hiding among the Masalit with impunity. One of these, Mohammed Kurtal, had escaped while awaiting execution in Nyala prison in 1922, wriggling out of his handcuffs and removing the bars from the window of his gaol cell.⁸⁴ Since then, he had been on the run. The DC commented that 'if the outlaws were captured or killed the effect on the Masalit would be very beneficial... Kurtal has the reputation of being a magician chiefly owing to his former spectacular escape from Nyala prison.' The DC suggested Dud Murra 'could easily have arrested or killed them, but feared to do so,' perhaps because of this popularity.⁸⁵ Only the arrival of a bullying police *mulahiz* [inspector] at Melik Dud's village finally pushed the chief into participation in a police operation which finally apprehended Kurtal. The *mulahiz* was still remembered several years later as 'the Masalit's bogey man, the giant with his club Um Deldumana terrified them. A word picture of him brings a sickly unwilling smile to the King's [Dud's] countenance.'⁸⁶ Once more, the state was being enacted by coercion and intimidation, though in this case a particular individual rather than a large military patrol performed this role.

For most of the leading chiefs of Southern Darfur then, the Nyala rising was a crucial moment in defining their alignment with the colonial state. Government responses to the rising created opportunities to pursue private agendas of profit and political ambition. And in some cases the impact of the rising pushed chiefs off the tightrope they walked between the demands of government and the need to protect the interests of their people. Chiefs were now more obviously linked to a violent and alien state.

Violence, negotiation and state formation

In terms of forging local imaginations of the state in Southern Darfur, the aftermath of the Nyala rebellion was surely a significant moment. In the late 1920s stories were told by Habbania about the conduct of the patrol (which they or their fathers accompanied) under the leadership of OC [Officer Commanding] Grigg:

There he stood with his little stick in his hand, no weapon, but only his stick and held us back till the machine guns had fired burrrrr. Then the Masalit fled and he lowered his stick and let us go after them.⁸⁷

I heard my father say that when Grigg Bey led the patrol against the Masalit their fikis wrote lists of the Koran on paper and washed off the ink and drenched a bull with it and then sent the bull to charge the Government army; but it was shot dead with a machine gun before ever it reached them!⁸⁸

The power of the machine gun is the dominant motif, including its capacity to overpower spiritual forms of protection. But what should also be noted is the close association of this new technology with the individual British officer, apparently armed with only a stick.⁸⁹ The state itself was perhaps understood to consist of these varying elements: the isolated local administrator and the usually invisible technologies of violence which lay behind him. As noted at the beginning of this article, the rising remained a key event in local memory in the 1940s: it is unlikely the violence of the patrol and the 'state effect' it produced was forgotten either. Moreover, in the course of the patrol, British officials in southern Darfur

visibly resembled their pre-colonial predecessors, surely appearing to fit into a deeper history of state violence in this zone. The Darfur Sultans had sent *magdums* (commissioners) to southern Darfur as their representatives in this peripheral region. These men had functioned as mobile and semi-autonomous warlords commanding sizable war-bands, combatting resistance to the Sultan's rule, but also settling local disputes.⁹⁰

These multiple functions of the pre-colonial local state were also enacted by British colonial administrators in the aftermath of the rebellion: in 1922 the coercive extraction of animals from local economies and the extra-legal killings of outlawed ringleaders were accompanied by some efforts at conciliation with those groups that had rebelled. Violence did not preclude negotiation. The new British administrator (now termed District Commissioner) of Southern Darfur, accompanied the patrol on its tour of pillage, in order to hear and respond to local grievances.⁹¹ This might at first appear a meaningless gesture, but the government actually subsequently moved the Masalit-Habbania boundary ten miles south of its present location, to the benefit of the Masalit.⁹² (Officials did not define any of the Habbania's other boundaries until the 1940s: they were now well aware of the 'great feeling' that boundary disputes were capable of causing).⁹³ Taxation resentments were also addressed after the rising. The voracious assessment boards were abolished in Darfur, and a general cultivation tax was rather set at a flat rate, eliminating over-assessment by *muawins*.⁹⁴

Subjects in Southern Darfur thus experienced the bi-polar character of the state, what the Nuer in southern Sudan would come to call the 'government of the left' (the useable civil institutions of the state, including the DC) and the 'government of the right' (the military which brought only death and destruction), in the course of a single patrol.⁹⁵ Crucially, however, the association between the two was clearly very close: the DC, a civilian official,

had nonetheless personally accompanied the military patrol, and would later tour this district with a very different, much smaller retinue, still hearing grievances and sometimes adjusting local regimes of governance accordingly. Some of the subsequent willingness to deal and negotiate with British officials in the course of local political disputes was surely linked to local perceptions of their closeness to the military apparatus of state, which could be used against people who did not recognize their authority. There was therefore also, by the same logic, a clear benefit to engaging with the DC: he could keep that violent force out of local life. There was also a similar reason for local people to engage and sometimes put up with the power (and abuses) of local chiefs: these men were also now associated with the military power of the state, yet recognizing their authority might also be a means of keeping that power at arm's length.⁹⁶ State violence underpinned people's willingness to negotiate and engage with the state and the local chiefs who were its auxiliaries.

Indeed after 1922 the association between state and chiefs became ever closer, and the visibility of the state in southern Darfur was also increased. Chiefs were given more clearly defined judicial powers, more explicitly derived from the state which had shown itself such a dangerous force to oppose. This was part of a wider trend towards 'Native Administration' or 'Devolution' in Sudan, but the events of the Nyala rising generated additional support for changes in central government policy. The Civil Secretary of Sudan, who took a leading role in determining administrative policy, noted in correspondence with the Governor General that during the Nyala rising and patrol 'practically every tribal *sheikh* in the district (excepting those of the Messalit and Fellata)... acted loyally and gave active assistance to the Government'.⁹⁷ The rising had been in part caused by an overly close relationship between the local state and Habbania elites: however, this was rapidly forgotten. Rather, the co-operation of most of the chiefs of Southern Darfur in the patrol (sometimes itself extracted

under duress, as we have seen) suggested that the relationship between chiefs and state should be more regularized and clearly defined. Strong chiefs would be powerful allies in a continuing fight against neo-Mahdist ‘fanaticism’: the imprisonment of the Masalit *melik* before the rising was now perceived as a serious error which had allowed rebellion to take hold, as noted previously. But this was not simply about negotiation and engagement with local logics of power: chiefs themselves, over the next ten years given ever increasing powers of imprisonment, flogging and fining over the members of entire tribes, became to a significant extent the instruments of devolved colonial violence.⁹⁸

Alongside this shifting direction in policy, a new government position was created in Southern Darfur District. Part of McNeill's failure in the eyes of his superiors had been his inability to build relationships with local peoples in southern Darfur, and his resultant incapacity to gather effective intelligence and knowledge of local conditions.⁹⁹ As a result the government created the position of Assistant District Commissioner for the Baggara who would ‘hear and rectify grievances’ and would be crucial to ‘restoring confidence and contentment and pacifying the country’.¹⁰⁰ The ADC would then continue efforts at local engagement which had begun during the military patrol. And despite being apparently assigned to the Baggara, the ADC’s sub-*merkaz* was actually located at Kubbe, in the heart of Masalit territory. The rebellious Masalit would be closely supervised.¹⁰¹ The state’s own surveillance and intelligence capacity in Southern Darfur was thus increased.

In essence, the approach followed in Darfur after 1922 was for chiefly and state authority to be more institutionalised and more closely intertwined. Selective local alliances and knowledge were to be replaced by a more consistent and bureaucratic system of ‘Native Administration’ which encompassed all local groups and (in theory) regularised the dealings

of their elites with the state. Yet although the pragmatic partnerships between local officials and chiefs were key to the construction of colonial authority, chiefs in southern Darfur were not simply all-powerful ‘decentralised despots’. Colonial officials in fact were often the focal point for frequent continued protest against chiefs, driven by a combination of factional rivalries within ‘tribal’ units and grievances against chiefly exactions. This drew on a deeper history of interaction between state and local chieftaincy politics in Darfur. But the new legal norms of the colonial state also became a discursive resource for opponents of chiefs to deploy in their (sometimes successful) efforts to persuade officials to punish or depose their leaders. People were not endlessly willing to endure chiefly abuse in order to keep the state out of local life: rather, the state could become a valuable supporter in local political disputes.¹⁰² But, barring a minor and easily repressed uprising in 1927 in western Darfur, people had learned that direct attacks on the state were too dangerous to attempt: the colonial state was now a fact of political life which had to be dealt with. And colonial violence underpinned these basic facts. Even in apparently the most stable period of colonial rule in Darfur the state remained ready to deploy its military force to make an impression on local minds: to ‘demonstrate’ the violence of the state. And it seems the state’s own institutional memory of the Nyala rising was one factor which lay behind this continued recourse to such demonstrations.

While Johnson suggests that the military became ‘less and less in evidence’ among the Nuer of south Sudan after 1920, in Darfur the colonial military presence remained rather visible throughout the Condominium period.¹⁰³ As well as several military officers working as long-serving District Commissioners in Darfur up until the late 1940s, the Western Arab Corps (WAC), the branch of the Sudan Defence Force based in Darfur, frequently appear in colonial records as being ‘on maneuvers’ in various parts of the province: the military also

made appearances at the annual ‘tribal gatherings’ which were held in the several districts of the province.¹⁰⁴ One particular report demonstrates this especially well.

In 1934 the DC of Southern Darfur District and one of his ADCs, William Luce, went on tour in Southern Darfur with a company of the WAC. They met the company near a village called Kileititi: the military had been accompanied to this point by one of the Baggara chiefs, Ali Senussi of the Taaisha people. Of course this restated the close relationship between military force, individual British officials, and local chiefs. Subsequently a difficult *meglis* (meeting) between officials and Gimr elites local to the area resulted in the administration conceding the election of a new *sheikh* of *sheikhs* to represent the Gimr on the local Native Court. But immediately after this an episode of field firing was shown to both chiefs and people. Luce recorded this in detail: ‘the idea was to show them what the Government can do when roused and to make them think before they tried a repetition of the 1921 affair’, referring explicitly of course to the Nyala rising. The details are worth recounting: ‘The Company had rigged up a small dervish village... they had also erected three stuffed figures in front of the village, supposed to represent “*fekis*”.’ Luce went on to describe the subsequent ‘fun’: rifles and machine guns were fired, the grass hut was set alight ‘to the astonishment of the crowd’. Jars that had been filled with water were shot, sending water spouting up, to add to the spectacle. Luce admitted that the company used ‘far more ammunition than was necessary’, and the rigged village was ‘reduced to a heap of smouldering ashes.’ This was all a very carefully stage-managed piece of theatre. Luce ‘took the crowd up to have a look at the debris’ and was subsequently gratified to overhear the departing Gimr saying ‘*Wallahi, hakuma shedid*’ – ‘By God, the government is strong.’¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

The Nyala rising was a turning point in the history of relations between the colonial state and local societies in Southern Darfur, and indeed across the province as a whole. This was the last time that such large-scale violent resistance to the state's authority would be marshaled in Darfur. In response the colonial state put on an unparalleled demonstration of the scope and efficacy of its coercive power in Southern Darfur, simultaneously theatrical and brutal. And the disparity between its own military capacity and that of rebellious subjects was also exposed as being too wide to be challenged. The machine gun was an unbeatable enemy.

Yet force also provided the grounds for negotiation. Some Darfuris now started to deal more directly with the state perhaps *because* they saw it as overwhelmingly powerful: those who gained the support of the state in their local political struggles would gain a powerful ally indeed. And local representatives of the state had also shown themselves to be not altogether unreceptive to local demands and elite interests. Even as the patrol looted local economies a single British official listened to local grievances and revised a much-hated boundary; taxation demands were amended; most significantly, the state associated itself more closely with local chiefs, devolving legally defined powers to these men whilst simultaneously increasing their own direct surveillance of local affairs. But while more systematic engagement between state and subjects developed after 1922, the performance of violence remained an important tool that could be used by the state to project its authority. Power was never made wholly productive; the colonial state in Darfur was not a 'modern' state in the Foucauldian sense. Rather the use of violent spectacle, a tool of pre-modern power in Foucault's schema, remained crucial in constituting colonial authority.¹⁰⁶ The state continued to present itself as a force too powerful to resist: the spectacular and theatrical

violence described above referred back to and reinforced local memories of large-scale early colonial violence.

Nonetheless, understanding colonial rule, and its ‘improbable’ stability¹⁰⁷ (for an admittedly limited period of time, especially in Darfur) does not depend on an interpretative choice between a view of state power as either consistently violently coercive or perpetually willing to compromise: rather it requires the acknowledgement that both violence and negotiation remained interactive elements of colonial authority, shifting in emphasis and manner over time, but nonetheless continually intertwined. This may seem rather obvious, but just as work that has emphasized the negotiated aspects of colonial rule has underplayed the role of violence in maintaining colonial authority, so a counter-tendency to re-focus attention on violence in some of the most recent scholarship on empire (of which this article is part) equally runs the risk of understating the local negotiations in which colonial states did attempt to engage the partial consent of subject populations.¹⁰⁸ In the case of Darfur, we might understand colonial authority to be a limited version of hegemony: in which consent to rule, generated in processes of local negotiation focused on chieftaincy politics, was extracted rather than freely given – indeed it was very firmly underpinned by the coercive potential of the state.¹⁰⁹

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¹ See Ibrahim, 'Neo-Mahdism' 440-441 for a full explanation of the ideology. 'It was generally believed among Muslims that the Mahdi would appear to fill the world with justice after it had been filled with injustice. But his mission would be temporarily halted by *al-masih al-dajjal* (the anti-Christ). *Nabi 'isa* would soon appear, however, to secure the permanence of the glorious Mahdiyya.' (Ibrahim, 440)

² McNeill, Inspector Southern Darfur District (SDD), 23 Sept. 1921, National Records Office, Khartoum (NRO) Darfur 1/1/3.

³ Extract from Al Ahram, 28 Oct. 1921, mentioning reports in the British press, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/2.

⁴ Wordsworth, DC (District Commissioner) Southern Darfur, Notes on the Nyala Rising, 1942 NRO Darfur 1/19A/102.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Adas, *Prophets*, xix.

⁷ Ibrahim, 'Neo-Mahdism'.

⁸ Iliffe, 'Maji Maji'; Ranger, *Rebellion*.

⁹ Monson 'Politics of alliance'; Branch, *Mau Mau*: 26-29, 208. See also Lonsdale, 'State' and 'Politics', and Johnson, *Prophets*.

¹⁰ Johnson, *Prophets*, 10.

¹¹ Daly only alludes to 'large numbers of animals' being 'confiscated' by the patrol in *Sorrow*: 282. Ibrahim provides a little more information in 'Neo-Mahdism', 463-464.

¹² The quoted phrases are taken from Alexander's *Unsettled land*: 7, which, however, does not forget the coercion and violence which existed alongside the negotiation of local authority.

¹³ Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism': 26-27.

¹⁴ Lonsdale 'Scramble', 764.

¹⁵ For everyday violence in colonial Africa see Hynd, 'Killing'; Mamdani, *Subject*.

¹⁶ Lonsdale, 'State', 32.

¹⁷ Ibid: 15.

¹⁸ A point made by Lonsdale in 'Politics', esp. at 54.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Prophets*, 5-9; Willis, 'Violence'.

²⁰ Maffey, Governor General to Governors, 1 Jan. 1927, NRO CIVSEC 1/9/33.

²¹ Willis, 'Violence', 92.

²² Lonsdale, 'State', 15.

²³ O'Fahey, *Sultanate*.

²⁴ Political Officer Patrol 99 to Governor Darfur, 1 Feb. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/3. This of course also means that twenty per cent were not: it is clear that the rebellion was also able to draw smaller levels of support from other peoples in southern Darfur.

²⁵ O'Fahey, *Sultanate*: 179.

²⁶ Ibid: 3, 241.

²⁷ Ibid: 83-4, 186.

²⁸ Ibid: 261-276.

²⁹ Daly, *Empire*: 171-191.

³⁰ Ibrahim, *Neo-Mahdism*: 457.

³¹ Savile, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 30 Nov. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.

³² Kapteijns, *Sudanica*: 230-231.

³³ O'Fahey, *Darfur*: 275.

³⁴ Adas, *Prophets*: 61-62.

³⁵ Wordsworth, DC Southern Darfur District, 'Notes on Nyala Rising', 1942, NRO Darfur 1/19A/102.

³⁶ Moawin Nyala to Governor, 27 Sept. 1921, NRO Darfur 1/1/3.

³⁷ Wordsworth, DC Southern Darfur District, 'Notes on Nyala Rising', 1942, NRO Darfur 1/19A/102.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Saville, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 30 Nov. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.

⁴⁰ O'Fahey, *Sultanate*: xix.

⁴¹ Kapteijns, *Sudanica*: 32.

⁴² Mamdani, *Saviors*: 118, 128.

⁴³ O'Fahey, 'Land'.

⁴⁴ Saville, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 30 Jan. 1922, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.

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- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Willis, Assistant Director of Intelligence to Governor Darfur, 17 May 1920, NRO 2.D.Fasher (A) 54/3/12.
- ⁴⁷ See MacMichael, 'Memorandum concerning the Admin policy to be followed in Darfur in the Immediate Future' Sudan Archive, Durham (SAD) 127/7 for a statement of how colonial rule was to function in Darfur after 1916 and for some of the details of how this was rather haphazardly implemented see Dupuis, Assistant Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 12 Jan 1924, NRO CIVSEC 66/10/96
- ⁴⁸ Adas, *Prophets*, 61-62.
- ⁴⁹ Bimbashi Hunt to Governor Darfur and OC Darfur, 27 Sept. 1921, NRO Darfur 1/1/3.
- ⁵⁰ ADC Political Officer Patrol 99 to Governor Darfur, 1 Feb. 1922, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁵¹ Wordsworth, DC Southern Darfur District, 'Notes on Nyala Rising', 1942, NRO Darfur 1/19A/102.
- ⁵² Director of Intelligence to Civil Secretary and Governor, 27 Nov. 1921, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁵³ Daly, *Empire*: 282.
- ⁵⁴ Governor Darfur to Director of Intelligence, 28 Feb. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7. This is all rather similar to the aims of the colonial patrols in the Nuba Mountains described by Willis in 'Violence': 93-94.
- ⁵⁵ OC Patrol 99 to Governor Darfur, 16 Nov. 1921; Press Release 1921, NRO Darfur 1/1/3; Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 25 Oct. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/6.
- ⁵⁶ Political Officer Patrol 99 to Governor Darfur, 1 Feb. 1922, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁵⁷ Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 17 Nov. 1921, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁵⁸ Civil Secretary to Governor, 19 Nov. 1921, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁵⁹ Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 18 Dec. 1921, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁶⁰ Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 31 Dec. 1921, *ibid*.
- ⁶¹ Savile, Governor Darfur to Director of Intelligence, 28 Feb. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ⁶² OC Darfur to Chief Staff Officer Egyptian Army, 23 Nov. 1921, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/1.
- ⁶³ OC Kubbum Column to OC Patrol 99, 20 Dec. 1921, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ⁶⁴ Proclamation by Savile 11/12/21, NRO Darfur 1/1/4.
- ⁶⁵ ADC SDD to Governor 17 Apr. 1922, *ibid*.
- ⁶⁶ Savile, Governor Darfur to DC SDD, 14 Apr. 1923, *ibid*.
- ⁶⁷ O'Fahey, *Sultanate*, pp. 60, 82; Daly, *Sorrow*, p. 93.
- ⁶⁸ DC SDD to Governor Darfur, 22 Jan. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/5. Again, cf. Willis, who reports the same strategies used in the Nuba Mountains, in 'Violence': 96.
- ⁶⁹ DC SDD to Governor, 11 Feb. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/4.
- ⁷⁰ ADC SDD to Governor, 7 Sept. 1924, NRO Darfur 1/1/5.
- ⁷¹ Branch, *Defeating*: 26-29, 208.
- ⁷² Daly, *Sorrow*, 51, 54.
- ⁷³ Director of Intelligence to Governor, 19 Jan 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ⁷⁴ Cf Lonsdale: 'In economic terms punitive expeditions were instruments of wealth distribution,' 'Politics', 67.
- ⁷⁵ Savile, Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 25 Oct. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/6.
- ⁷⁶ OC No 3 Company to OC Patrol 99, 1 Dec. 1921, *ibid*.
- ⁷⁷ DCSDD to Governor, 21 Mar. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ⁷⁸ OC No 3 Company to OC Patrol 99, 1 Dec. 1921, *ibid*.
- ⁷⁹ DC SDD to Governor Darfur, 7 Mar. 1922, *ibid*.
- ⁸⁰ Statement of *mulahiz* of police, Abdulla Abu Zeid, 3 Apr. 1923, NRO Darfur 1/1/5.
- ⁸¹ Savile, Governor Darfur to DCSDD, 30 May 1923, *ibid*.
- ⁸² DC SDD to Governor, 2 Feb. 1922, NRO CIVSEC (1) 122/1/2.
- ⁸³ Governor Darfur to Civil Secretary, 25 Oct. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/6.
- ⁸⁴ DC SDD to Governor, 3 July 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/5.
- ⁸⁵ DC SDD to Governor 24 Aug. 1924, *ibid*.
- ⁸⁶ ADC Baggara to Governor, 5 Jan. 1927, NRO 2.D.Fasher 54/3/13.
- ⁸⁷ G.D. Lampen memoirs, SAD 734/10/79.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, SAD 735/1/170.
- ⁸⁹ This is also rather reminiscent of the famous myth of Gordon often being armed only with a swagger-stick in battle.
- ⁹⁰ O'Fahey, *Sultanate*, 187, 215.
- ⁹¹ Savile, Governor Darfur to DC SDD, 4 Mar. 1922, *ibid*.
- ⁹² ADC Political Officer Patrol 99 to Governor Darfur, 1 Feb. 1922, NRO CIVSEC (1)122/1/2.
- ⁹³ ADC Baggara to DC SDD, 11 May 1925, NRO Darfur 54/3/12.
- ⁹⁴ Report by the Governor General on the finances, administration and condition of Sudan (Khartoum, 1923).
- ⁹⁵ Hutchinson, *Dilemmas*: 110. See also Lienhardt, 'Sudan': 27.

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- ⁹⁶ Similar arguments regarding the role of chiefs are made in Leonardi, 'Violence': 535-558 and Willis, 'Hukm': 29-50.
- ⁹⁷ Civil Secretary to Private Secretary, 11 Mar. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/1/5.
- ⁹⁸ Cf. Mamdani, *Subject*. A fuller examination of the role of the chief in Darfur lies beyond the scope of this article.
- ⁹⁹ DC SDD to Governor 21 Mar. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ¹⁰⁰ Governor Darfur to Director of Intelligence, 28 Feb. 1922, NRO Darfur 1/2/7.
- ¹⁰¹ Daly, *Sorrow*: 121. Similarly, the occupation of the larger Dar Masalit in western Darfur was hurried along in the wake of the rising.
- ¹⁰² See Vaughan, 'Negotiating', esp. Chapters 1 and 4, for more on this.
- ¹⁰³ Johnson, *Prophets*, 16. This tendency was interrupted, though not apparently reversed, by the violence of 1928-9.
- ¹⁰⁴ For one example of many see Darfur Province Monthly Diary, February 1937, NRO CIVSEC 57/4/16.
- ¹⁰⁵ All this is taken from W. Luce diary, 29 November 1934 – 1 December 1934, SAD 829/12. I am grateful to James Morton for reminding me of this material in his own research.
- ¹⁰⁶ For a similar point see B. Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial theory: contexts, practices, politics* (London, 1997), p. 162.
- ¹⁰⁷ Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism': 26.
- ¹⁰⁸ See for instance Gott, *Resistance* (London, 2011); also Elkins, *Gulag*.
- ¹⁰⁹ For hegemony as process see Comaroff and Comaroff, *Revelation*: 20, 25; for consent as extracted see Copland, 'Hegemony': 637-639.